Investigating Interfaith Harmony and Religious Tolerance through Text Messages: A Case Study of Sindhi Hindus and Sindhi Muslims in Sindh, Pakistan

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Abstract

Sindh, a province of Pakistan, was a seat of the ancient Indus Valley Civilization during the third millennium BC as shown by Mohen-jo-Daro excavations (Mukherjee 2020). The people of this land known as Sindhis have followed and practiced religious harmony and peace since ancient times. There were times when both Hindus and Buddhists lived in peace and harmony with each other in Sindh. When Islam came into Sindh in 712, many Sindhis embraced it and lived peacefully with the Hindus and Buddhists. This long tradition of peaceful coexistence created a syncretic culture among the Sindhis who rejected the religious communalism prevalent in the subcontinent. Even during the partition of India and Pakistan, Sindh was relatively free of inter-communal violence as compared to Bengal, Punjab, and other regions (Bhavnani 2014). This syncretic culture of religious tolerance and interfaith harmony has conquered communal bias in Sindh even after the partition of the sub-continent in 1947. Today, Sindhi Hindus constitute 7.5% of almost total 48 million population of Sindh and appear to be living peacefully with people of different faiths. In the era of sophisticated technology, values of harmony and coexistence have been further reinvigorated through WhatsApp, text, and Facebook messages to wish each other by Sindhi Hindus and Sindhi Muslims during their respective religious festivals. This study explores how interfaith harmony and religious tolerance among Muslim and Hindu Sindhis are formed through text messages which they exchange to wish each other during their religious festivals. Data were collected through text documentation of the messages which were exchanged among the Sindhis through smartphones, notepads, and laptops. Spradley's Developmental Research Sequence (DRS) model (2016) was used to analyze the data. DRS incorporates a study of the way of life and experience from the way members of a community live it. Netnography, an online research method, originating in ethnography is used to understand the social interaction among an

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ethnic community having different faiths, who used digital communication. The results of the study show that interfaith harmony and religious tolerance are transmitted based on traditional values of mutual respect between Sindhi Muslims and Hindus using sophisticated digital instruments.

. **Keywords:** Interfaith, harmony, Sindhi, religious, tolerance, Muslims, Hindus.

1.   Introduction

Sindh, a province of Pakistan, was a seat of the ancient Indus Valley Civilization during the third millennium BC as shown by Mohen-jo-Daro excavations (Mukherjee 2020). "Sindh properly rendered "Sindhu" is primarily the indigenous name of the river known in the western world as "Indus"" (Solangi, Laghari, and Kabooro 2017, 114) and the "Indus Valley Civilization represents the glorious past of Sindh" (Solangi, Laghari, and Kabooro 2017, 115). Mohenjo-Daro, was the capital of Sindh during the third millennium BC and the residents of Mohen-jo-Daro used to worship goddess, Shiva, and other deities (Solangi, Laghari, and Kabooro 2017). Persian invasions, Aryan arrivals, Greek, Arab, and British invasions of Sindh brought different faiths and religions to the region, however, the different cultures and faiths enriched Sindh's norms and values (Syed 2010).

Before the Arab conquest of Sindh in 712, there were many religions and sects in Sindh. In this regard, Mumtaz Hussain Pathan (1978, 93) reported that there were Buddhists who practiced Buddhism, and there were Hindus who worshiped their deities in Sindh. Speaking on the religion of the pre-Arab conquest of Sindh, Jafarey (discussed in Hamida Khuro 1993) writes that their religion was not monotheistic and focused on truthfulness and righteousness and that their gods and goddesses represented noble qualities, such as love, kindness, tenderness, strength, beneficence, helpfulness, and friendliness (Khuro 1993). Even after the advent of new faiths and cultural influences, the people of Sindh have tried their best to save and maintain their culture of harmony and peace (Syed 2010).

Sindh came under Arab-Muslim rule when Mohammad Bin Qasim subjugated Sindh in 712 AD. The new rulers of Sindh did not enforce their new faiths upon the local people; and allowed them to retain their earlier faiths (Ali, 2004). The local Sindhis who believed in human kindness were open to accepting the values of brotherhood in Islam. This period sowed the seeds of Islam, and many Sindhis of the Alafis tribe accepted the religion following in the footsteps of their converted tribal chief (Ali 2017).

Even during the partition of India and Pakistan, Sindh was relatively free of inter-communal violence compared to Bengal, the Punjab, and other regions (Bhavnani 2014). This syncretic culture of religious tolerance and interfaith harmony has conquered communal bias in Sindh even after the partition of the sub-continent in 1947. Today, Sindhi Hindus are 7.5% of almost a total 48

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million in Sindh and live peacefully with people of different faiths (National Census Survey, 2019). After centuries of living together, both Hindu and Muslim Sindhis appear to have retained a syncretic culture of religious tolerance and peaceful co-existence (Abro 2019).

1.1 Interfaith Harmony and Religious Tolerance among Sindhi Muslims and Sindhi Hindus in Sindh

Interfaith harmony is a condition in which people of different faiths live peacefully with each other and is aimed at eliminating the possibility of conflict-violent or non-violent- between different religious groups or sects. The proponents of interfaith harmony call for local and global acceptance of religious diversity and peaceful coexistence. Interfaith harmony entails religious tolerance of different tenets and human behavior manifestations as prescribed in different religions and faiths. Tolerance implies a person's ability to tolerate differences of opinion based upon religion, faith, culture, or political association.

1.2 Religious Festivals of Sindhi Hindus

Three religious festivals celebrated by Sindhi Hindus are discussed in this article. These are Holi, Diwali, and Raksha Bandhan. Holi is celebrated on the 10th of March by Sindhi Hindus to welcome the season of Spring. Sindhi Hindus celebrate the Holi festival by throwing colors at each other and worshipping their gods. Sindhi Hindus celebrate Diwali in memory of the return of their exiled deities (Rama and Sita) to Ayodhya after 14 years (for more details see Agarwal 2020). At the Diwali festival, Sindhi Hindus go shopping, decorate their homes, prepare sweets, crack fireworks, and visit their relatives (for more details see Office Holidays in Sindh Pakistan 2021). Also, Sindhi Hindus celebrate Raksha Bandhan in the month of Shravan to show the bond of love between brothers and sisters. During this festival, Hindu Sindhi sisters tie 'rakhis' around the wrists of their brothers, and the Hindu Sindhi brothers give presents to their sisters (for more details see The Sindhu World accessed 2020).

1.3 Religious Festivals of Sindhi Muslims

Sindhi Muslims' religious festivals of Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha are now discussed. The word 'Eid' literally means a festival. The term 'Eid Mubarak' is a way of wishing/greeting someone on the occasion of Eid. Sindhi Muslims celebrate Eid al-Fitr after completing their fasts in the month of Ramadhan, the ninth month in the Islamic calendar. They wear new clothes, offer prayers in mosques, prepare foods, and meet their friends and relatives. They also celebrate Eid al-Adha on the tenth of Zil-haj, the twelfth month in the Islamic calendar. On Eid al-Fitr, Sindhi Muslims put on new clothes, go to their mosques to pray, follow some religious customs, prepare different types of food, and meet relatives and friends (for more details see Barr 2020).

On their religious festivals, both Sindhi Muslims and Sindhi Hindus congratulate each other and share their happiness and good wishes with each other.

1.4 Sufism: A Bridge of Harmony and Tolerance between the Sindhis

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Sufism is an Islamic version of mysticism and a school of practice that stresses the inward search for God and avoids materialistic dimensions of life (Specia 2017). Inspired by Sufism, Sindhis of different faiths have been living peacefully for centuries with each other in Sindh. The philosophy of tolerance and interfaith harmony is strong in Sindh due to the general acceptance of Sufism. Sufism has taught Sindhis the way of achieving nearness and divine love through loving and respecting all faiths, nations, classes, and races. The poetry of Qazi Qadan, Shah Abdul Karim, Shah Inayat, Shah Abdul Latif, and Sachal Sarmast has taught Sindhis the values of humanity and kindness (Jotwani 2016). Both Sindhi Muslims and Sindhi Hindus visit the shrines of the above-mentioned poets as a token of showing respect for their ideology. Annually, Sindhis of different faiths set on a spiritual journey to Hanglaj, a place near the border of the province of Sindh and Baluchistan which has become a representative of communal understanding between Hindus and Muslims (Schaflechner 2018).

1.5 Theoretical Framework

In this research, we have used Spradley's Developmental Sequence Method (2016) as a theoretical framework and the four steps are shown in Table 1. The four steps in James Spradley's Method are now discussed. Spradley's domains are categories of cultural meanings (Garrido 2017). These categories contain sub-categories-a cover term/name and included terms/names-which are semantically related. The cover term is a name of a religious festival, and the included terms are performers of a religious festival. These terms develop a semantic field in which words are coherently related to each other. The cultural domains are established when research participants engage in a real-life interaction. Since this research paper addresses virtual domains, careful attention has been paid to analyze the construction of the known virtual, cultural domains through WhatsApp messages, Facebook posts, and mobile text messages which Muslim Sindhis and Hindu Sindhis exchange with each other on the occasion of their religious festivals. 'Eid Mubarak' (Happy Eid), 'Diwali Mubarak' (Happy Diwali) are cultural domains established by Sindhis with 'stay blessed' 'enjoy your day' as sub-categories within the cultural domains.

In addition to domain analysis, the second step involved in Spradley's method (2016) is taxonomy analysis. In his method, taxonomies represent conceptual constructs that are achieved by establishing hierarchical relationships within domains. A taxonomy shows the relationships between sub-sets and the whole (Spradley 2016). In this, sub-sets of the main domain are categorized to form broader constructs for ease of systematic analysis.

Apart from taxonomic analysis, Spradley's method (2016) also contains component analysis which emerges from domains and taxonomies. It involves a reflective activity that allows researchers to understand the meaning of a term in contrast to another term (Garrido 2017). In this step, the additional information provided or shared by a research participant, other than the main term, is also analyzed. (Garrido 2017).

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In the final step of thematic analysis, general and specific features/ideas of collected data/observed culture are highlighted and analyzed (Garrido 2017).

Table 1: Elements of Spradley's Method

Elements of Spradley's Method	Examples
1. **Domain Analysis** a. **Cover term (Holi)** b. **Included terms (Hindu brothers, I)** c. **Semantic relationships (wish, pray).**	Domains are meaningful categories constructed by speech communities through the use of language. If a piece of a speech or a write-up contains a cover term, included terms, and semantic relationships between these two terms, it is known as a domain. For instance, the messages which Sindhi Muslims and Sindhi Hindus exchange on their religious festivals are manifestations of cultural domains. Example 1: "To all my Hindu brothers, I heartily wish Happy Diwali. I pray your lives always shine like the lights of Diwali." In the given domain, 'Diwali' which is a name of a religious festival serves as a cover term. Additionally, 'Hindu brothers' who are celebrating Holi is an included term. The wishes which the creator of the statement has expressed enable the terms to cohere with each other and thereby establish a cultural domain. Example 2: "I wish a very happy and peaceful *Eid al-Adha* to you and your family. May Allah grant you a harmonious and prosperous life and accept good deeds, forgive your transgressions and sins and ease the suffering of all the peoples around the globe...Amen". Eid al-Adha is a cover term, while 'you', 'your family', etc. are included terms.
2. **Taxonomy Analysis**	In taxonomy analysis, the meaningful constructs which are based upon hierarchical relationships are analyzed. In the above-given domain, both Sindhi Muslims and Sindhi Hindus are in a subordinate relationship with the Supreme Being Who blesses their lives.

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	1. "I pray your lives always shine like the lights of Diwali". (Hierarchical relation between Sindhi Hindus and their gods who will make their lives shine). 2. "May Allah grant you a harmonious and prosperous life and accept good deeds, forgive your transgressions and sins and ease the suffering of all the peoples around the globe...Amen." (Hierarchical relationship between Sindhi Muslims and their God).
3. **Component Analysis**	Components are formed from domains and taxonomies. In the given statement, Holi/Eid is a cultural component/domain, the acts of wishing, celebrating, and praying by the Sindhis, and their anticipation of being blessed by their Creator are all components that pave the way for universal constructs.
4. **Theme Analysis**	Themes are general ideas that are inferred from a given cultural domain. In the following given instances, the themes of interfaith harmony and religious tolerance have been manifested by Sindhis. 1. "To all my Hindu brothers, I heartily wish Happy Diwali." (this shows tolerance and harmony). 2. "I wish a very happy and peaceful *Eid al-Adha* to you and your family." (also, this reflects tolerance and harmony).

Spradley's method (2016), is used to study Sindhis' religious tolerance and interfaith harmony. In the first step which is domain analysis, Sindhi Hindus' and Sindhi Muslims' text messages have been analyzed which represent cultural coexistence and peaceful pluralism. In the second step, the text messages will be classified into taxonomies based on their central ideas of goodwill and friendliness. Similarly, the messages will be analyzed component-wise and thematically to demonstrate Sindhis' interfaith harmony and religious tolerance towards each other.

1.6 Research Objectives

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a. To show Sindhi Hindus' promotion of religious tolerance and interfaith harmony towards Sindhi Muslims.
b. To show Sindhi Muslims' promotion of religious tolerance and interfaith harmony towards Sindhi Hindus.
c. To analyze the propagation of peacefulness by Sindhis using Spradley's Method.

2. Literature Review

We now move on to discuss related work on the issues of interfaith harmony and religious tolerance between Sindhi Muslims and Sindhi Hindus in the Sindh province of Pakistan. Previous studies showed religious tolerance and interfaith harmony among Sindhis by discussing the past history of Sindh and the role of Sufism. None of these studies to the best of our knowledge, showed the role of technology and the use of social media in promoting interfaith harmony and religious tolerance. In addition, none of the previous studies used Spradley's taxonomy to analyze their findings. It is hoped that this study fills this research vacuum by investigating the themes of religious tolerance and interfaith harmony as demonstrated in text messages by Sindhi Muslims and Hindus on the occasion of their respective religious festivals and by analyzing these messages using Spradley's taxonomy.

Sindh province is at a critical stage of history, and the inhabitants of the province should preserve Sindh's cultural heritage of religious tolerance and propagate Sufi education (Taherani and Memon 2015). Taherani and Memon draw upon historical descriptions of Sindh's cultural heritage and call for tolerance through Sufi education. Their research approach is explanatory in its form and content. Their research discussions flout parameters of analytical apparatus and critical underpinnings. Moreover, their approach is retrogressive, as they are engrossed in exploring the past of Sindhi culture.

Informed by the historical legacy of Sindh, Priya Kumar and Rita Kothari (2016) have qualitatively analyzed Sindhis' fluidity of religious associations and practices. Analyzing the historical data from pre-partition days Sindh, they have cogently demonstrated that "Sindh's 'unorthodox' version of Hinduism must be seen as an outcome of three predominant influences— Islam, Sikhism, and Sufism" (Kumar and Kothari 2016, 775). Moreover, they associate relative peacefulness among Sindhi Muslims and Sindhi Hindus with the geographical location of Sindh and the economic interdependence of its inhabitants.

Abdul Hadi (2015) also employing a qualitative method of analysis, critically discusses that Sindhi Hindus of Sindh despite their continued practice of religious tolerance and interfaith harmony have been subjected to persecution at the hands of non-Sindhi religious extremists from the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Providing some instances of persecution of Sindhi Hindus in Sindh he implies that Sindhi Hindus are forced to migrate from Sindh, Pakistan. However, in his research article, Abdul Hadi does not discuss the mutual respect, love, and interfaith harmony

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which Sindhis of different faiths show towards each other and which enhances their love and attachment to their motherland.

In addition to Hadi (2015), Ahmed and Chandio (2019) have employed an ethnographic, qualitative research design to focus on Sufi shrines to demonstrate that "interfaith harmony is one of the important Sufi practices. All Sufi saints believe, teach and promote interfaith harmony. It is because of this reason that they have a vast number of followers from all sects and religions" (Ahmed, and Chandio 2019, 424). Although their research work advocates religious tolerance and interfaith harmony through Sufism, their data collection is confined to religious shrines.

Apart from Ahmed and Chandio (2019), Levesque (2020) has also qualitatively analyzed some of the writings of Sindhi intellectuals to suggest that Sufism is the identity maker of Sindh's Sindhis irrespective of their religion or caste. Thematically analyzing the purposively sampled chunks taken from the works of Sindhi writers, he concludes "the proponents of the idea of Sufism as a characteristic of Sindh and Sindhi identity believe that Sindh possesses a specific 'Sufi culture' which has ensured the peaceful coexistence of various religions throughout time" (Levesque 2020, 17).

3.   Material and Methods

In this study, we have also employed a qualitative research method in data collection and analysis. We purposively sampled research participants, both Sindhi Muslims and Sindhi Hindus, to share their messages which they exchanged on the occasions of their religious festivals. The messages were shared with us by both men and women who were between 20 to 35 years old. Three research participants were aged between 20 to 25 years, while five research participants were aged between 28 to 35. The messages had been shared among the research participants through WhatsApp, Facebook, and mobile text messages. Moreover, the data were shared with us by the research participants in form of screenshots and forwarded actual messages. The collected data were then documented and codified for analysis using Spradley's Developmental Sequence Method (2016).

In addition, phone calls were made to three of these participants who were chosen purposively due to ease of access, and conversations with each of them were held for about five minutes. Notes were taken and reflections on their responses were made as suggested by Spradley (2016). The aim of these post-data collection interviews was to further investigate the intentions and motives of the research participants in sharing the congratulatory messages.

4.   Results and discussion

In this section, we are moving ahead to present and analyze research findings using Spradley's method (2016). First, we analyze Sindhi Muslims' congratulatory messages which they sent to their Sindhi Hindu friends on the occasion of the latter's religious festivals. The data have been tabulated here for systematic analysis.

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Table 2 Displaying Sindhi Muslims' Feelings and Attitudes towards Sindhi Hindus in Sindh

Research Participants (Sindhi Muslims)	Examples (Messages)	Domain Analysis	Taxonomy Analysis	Component Analysis	Theme Analysis
Research Participant 1	"HAPPY HOLI to all my teachers, trainees, friends, and all those who are celebrating. May the life of all be blessed with colors of love and smiles as those of Holi. #Happy #Holi."	1. Cover term: 'Holi' is a cover term. 2. Included terms: 'my teachers', 'trainees', 'friends', and 'all those who are celebrating' are included terms. 3. Semantic relationship: Wishing Holi is due to the annual occurrence of the Festival and religious tolerance in Sindh.	Hierarchical relationship: Those who celebrate Holi have been subordinated to their God who will bless them.	1. Occasion: Holi festival. 2. Sign: White Pigeon. 3. Act: wishing, praying, blessing. 4. Emotion: Happiness.	Sharing good wishes with Sindhi Hindus by Sindhi Muslims shows implicit themes of religious tolerance and interfaith harmony.
Research Participant 2	"Happy Diwali (Festival of	1. Cover term: Diwali	Hierarchical relationship: Diwali	1. Occasion: Diwali	This message also

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	Lights) to all"	2. Included term: all 3. Semantic relationship: Wishing here is an effect/part of the religious festival (Diwali).	celebration is a religious ritual that puts Sindhi Hindus in a subordinate relationship with their deities Rama and Sita (for more details see Agarwal, 2020).	2. Sign: lights. 3. Act: wishing. 4. Emotion: Happiness.	reflects the values of interfaith harmony and religious tolerance.
Research Participant 3	"To all my Hindu brothers, I heartily wish Happy Diwali. I pray your lives always shine like the lights of Diwali."	1. Cover term: Diwali. 2. Included terms: 'all my Hindu brothers'. 3. Semantic relationship: These heartfelt wishes and prayers are effects of peace traditions in Sindh and the occasion of the Diwali festival.	Hierarchical relationship: The subordinates pray to their Superordinate God for blessings and favors.	1. Occasion: Diwali. 2. Sign. No 3. Act: wishing and praying. 4. Emotion: Happiness.	Religious tolerance and interfaith harmony are the main ideas.
Research Participant 4	"Dear Hindu brothers and sisters, please receive my	1. Cover term: Raksha Bandhan. 2. Included terms:	Hierarchical relationship: Superordinate God can strengthen the bond	1. Occasion: Raksha Bandhan. 2. Sign: no. 3. Act: wishing	

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	sincere feelings of love and respect on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan. May the bonds between brothers and sisters remain evergreen.,,	'Hindu brothers and sisters. 3. Semantic relationship: The felicitation is a part of the Raksha Bandhan festival.	between brothers and sisters who look to God for protection.	and praying. 4. Emotion: Happiness.

As shown in the above-given table, Sindhi Muslims have developed cultural domains of Holi, Diwali, and Raksha Bandhan while wishing their Sindhi Hindu friends using sophisticated gadgets and social media. The given domains involve cover terms, included terms, and semantic relationships that develop semantic fields related to their religious festivals. The cover terms are 'Holi', 'Diwali', and 'Raksha Bandhan', while 'teachers', 'trainers', 'friends', 'all', 'brothers', and 'sisters' are included terms. Furthermore, wishing Sindhi Hindus is a part/effect of the religious festivals, an act which Spradley (2016) has called a type of semantic relationship.

In addition to the religio-cultural domains, the Sindhi Muslims' text messages to their Sindhi Hindu friends also contain taxonomic hierarchies. These taxonomic categories are based upon hierarchical relationships between Sindhi Hindus and their gods. As demonstrated in the messages, the Sindhi Hindus depend upon their superordinate gods for blessings and favors. Also, it shows the fact that their gods are in a superordinate position, whereas the Sindhi Hindus are in a subordinate position in the hierarchical structure developed within the Sindhi Muslims' text messages.

Apart from taxonomic categorization, Sindhi Muslims' messages to their Sindhi Hindu friends in Sindh also comprise of different components. These components are occasions, signs, acts, and emotions. The occasions of religious festivals (Holi, Diwali, and Raksha Bandhan) are textual constructions that also help the Sindhi Muslims in developing semantic fields/domains. Additionally, these messages also consist of signs, such as lights, pigeons (their pictures accompanied with the messages) which enhance the symbolic value of the shared messages. Also,

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their messages represent the acts of wishing Sindhi Hindus on their religious festivals. The acts of wishing reflect Sindhi Muslims' emotions of happiness as is appropriate for the occasions.

All these components in the Sindhi Muslims' messages combined to form the implicit themes of interfaith harmony and religious tolerance. Since their religious identity is different, but their feelings and attitudes towards Sindhi Hindus and their religious festivals reflect tolerance and harmony. Also, this behavior of tolerance is what Kumar and Kothari (2016) have called fluidity of religious practices in Sindh.

Now we move on to analyze Sindhi Hindus' text messages sent to their Sindhi Muslim friends through sophisticated gadgets and social media on the occasion of the latter's religious festivals.

Table 3 Displaying Sindhi Hindus' Feelings and Attitudes towards Sindhi Muslims in Sindh

Research Participants (Sindhi Hindus)	Examples (Messages)	Domain Analysis	Taxonomy Analysis	Component Analysis	Theme Analysis
Research Participant 5	"I wish a very happy and peaceful *Eid al-Adha* to you and your family. May Allah grant you a harmonious and prosperous life and accept good deeds, forgive your transgressions and sins and ease the suffering of all the peoples around the	1. Cover term: Eid al-Adha. 2. Included terms: 'you and your family. 3. Semantic relationship: Wishing Eid is a part of the religious festival.	The hierarchical relationship between Allah and Sindhi Muslims as the Former forgives the latter's sins and eases their suffering.	1. Occasion: Eid al-Adha. 2. Sign: Mosque 3. Act: Wishing and praying. 4. Emotion: happiness.	Interfaith harmony and religious tolerance are the main ideas embedded within the message shared by the participant (5).

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	globe...Amen ".				
Research Participant 6	"Eid-ul-Adha Mubarak to all my friends, colleagues, and dear students."	1. Cover term: Eid al-Adha. 2. Included terms: 'friends, colleagues, and dear students'. 3. Semantic relationship: wishing 'Eid Mubarak' is a part of the religious festival.	Hierarchical relationship: The wisher and the wished are in a cooperative relationship.	1. Occasion: Eid al-Adha. 2. Sign: 3. Act: wishing. 4. Emotion: Happiness	Themes of interfaith harmony and religious tolerance are inherent to the participant's (6) message.
Research Participant 7	"On this Eid, may God accept your sacrifices and make your every day like Eid. Eid Mubarak to you and your family."	1. Cover term: Eid (al-Adha). 2. Included terms: 'you and your family'. 3. Semantic relationship: Wishing Eid is a part of the religious festival.	Hierarchical relationship: God is in a superordinate position of accepting sacrifices and blessing Sindhi Muslims.	1. Occasion: Eid. 2. Sign: 3. Act: wishing and praying. 4. Emotion: Happiness.	The central ideas are interfaith harmony and religious tolerance.

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Research Participant 8	"Accept my felicitations on this Eid-al-Fitr. May God accept your fasts and bless you forever".	1. Cover term: Eid al-Fitr. 2. Included terms: 'God', 'your fasts'. 3. Semantic relationship: wishing Eid is a part of the religious festival.	Hierarchical relationship: God is in a superordinate relationship with Sindhi Muslims because He will accept Sindhi Muslims' fasts and thereby bless them.	1. Occasion: Eid. 2. Sign: 3. Act: wishing and praying. 4. Emotion: Happiness.	Themes of interfaith harmony and religious tolerance are also manifest in the given example.

Much like Sindhi Muslims, Sindhi Hindus in Sindh have also developed cultural domains related to Eid al-Adha and Eid al-Fitr by wishing their Sindhi Muslim friends through modern means of communication technology. The cultural domains/semantic fields developed by Sindhi Hindus in their messages to their Sindhi Muslim friends consist of cover terms, included terms, and semantic relationships. 'Eid al-Adha', and 'Eid al-Fitr' are cover terms in their messages, while 'you', 'your family', 'friends', 'colleagues', 'students', etc. are included terms. The Sindhi Hindus have created semantic relationships between the cover terms and the included terms demonstrating that wishing Eid greeting is a part of the religious ritual (Eid).

Sindhi Hindus' textual messages also contain hierarchical taxonomy. As demonstrated in the messages, Sindhi Muslims are in a hierarchical relationship with their God. The former fit into a subordinate position, while the latter occupies a superordinate place in the cultural domains. In this hierarchical relationship, God accepts prayers and blesses Sindhi Muslims for their obedience and worship. Thus, Sindhi Hindus' congratulatory messages involve hierarchical structures.

Not only taxonomic categories but also different components are characteristic features of Sindhi Hindus' good wishes messages to their Sindhi Muslim friends in Sindh. One of the components in their messages is the occasions of Eid al-Adha and Eid al-Fitr. The second component in their messages is a sign. One of their WhatsApp messages accompanied a picture of a mosque (a sign) which enhances the semantic value of the cultural domains developed by Sindhi Hindus in their messages. Also, their messages contained the acts of greeting/wishing Eid which reflected their emotions of happiness. In this way, the Sindhi Hindus developed the different components in their messages sent to their Sindhi Muslim friends through social media.

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All these components analyzed above textually construct and consolidate the universal ideas of interfaith harmony and religious tolerance among Sindhis in Sindh, ideas which are, to borrow Spradley's concept (2016), implicit themes.

4.1 Similarities in Sindhi Muslims' and Sindhi Hindus' Text Messages Sent on the Occasions of their Respective Religious Festivals

The messages of the Sindhi Muslims and the Sindhi Hindus are similar in their media, contents/domains, moods, and themes. Both the Sindhi Muslims and the Sindhi Hindus made use of social media with the help of sophisticated gadgets to wish each other on the occasions of their religious festivals. They employed Facebook, WhatsApp, and mobile text message services as tools to achieve their cultural goals of peaceful coexistence. These modern means of communication enabled them to establish virtual, cultural domains of syncretic culture.

The cultural domains/contents which both the communities in Sindh have developed are related to their respective religious festivals. The Sindhi Muslims celebrate their Eid festivals and share their happiness with Sindhi Hindus using social media. Similarly, the Sindhi Hindus send their good wishes on their religious festivals through social media to their Sindhi Muslim friends. The two communities are actually developing what some years ago Kumar and Kothari (2016) defined as fluid practices, but in this case, it is happening in the virtual domain.

In addition to the cultural, virtual domains, moods/emotions in their messages are also similar. Both the communities have expressed their feelings of happiness when conveying their good wishes to each other. For instance, the Sindhi Muslims have wished their Sindhi Hindu friends in a way that reflects happiness and good attitudes. In the same manner, the Sindhi Hindus have happily wished Sindhi Muslims on their religious festivals. Additionally, their congratulatory messages have a common characteristic of being sent along with prayers and good wishes.

The similarity of themes is yet another characteristic in the messages shared/sent to each other by both the communities. Their messages contain universal ideas which Spradley (2016) defined as implicit themes. The messages implicitly reflect the themes of religious tolerance and interfaith harmony. This developing culture of tolerance is upheld both by Sindhi Muslims and Sindhi Hindus using social media effectively.

Thus, there are indeed similarities in the messages of the Sindhis which they send/share on the occasion of their religious festivals to wish each other.

5.   Conclusion

The role of the content of the messages (both verbal and graphic) using social media and smart technology like WhatsApp and Facebook in displaying interfaith harmony and religious tolerance

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on the occasion of their religious festivals among Sindhi Hindus and Sindhi Muslims discloses that the age-old brotherhood and goodwill among this ethnic group despite religious differences prevails.

The practitioners of interfaith harmony and religious tolerance as features of Sindh and Sindhi identity are of the view that "Sindh possesses a specific 'Sufi culture' which has ensured the peaceful co-existence of various religions throughout time" (Levesque 2020, 17). In these days of modern communication technology, there is a resurge and passioned support for these values of peace and tolerance among Sindhis in Sindh.

The aim of this research article was to investigate the values of interfaith harmony and religious tolerance in the Sindhis' messages using Spradley's Developmental Sequence Model (2016). The purposively sampled messages of both the Sindhi Muslims and the Sindhi Hindus were qualitatively analyzed to demonstrate that the ethnic community is successfully developing virtual domains to strengthen the values of interfaith harmony and religious tolerance. Hence, Sindhis in Sindh are setting a good example for the other provinces of Pakistan to propagate and consolidate the values of religious tolerance and interfaith harmony.

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